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The Friday Letter

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On the Hill



Six Senators and seven House members have announced plans to retire at the end of the 99th congress next year.

From the Senate, they are: Thomas F. Eagleton (D-MO); Russell B. Long (D-LA); John P. East (R-NC); Barry Goldwater (R-AR); Paul Laxalt (R-NV) and Charles McC. Mathias, Jr. (R-MD).

From the House of Representatives, they are: Parren J. Mitchell (D-MD); Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, Jr. (D-MA); Elwood Hillis (R-IN); Marjorie S. Holt (R-MD); Eldon Rudd (R-AR); Gene Snyder (R-KY), and G. William Whitehurst (R-VA).

Twenty other House members have announced for or are likely to seek other political office. Fifteen will run for a Senate seat and five for Governor.

-Bill Tlucek

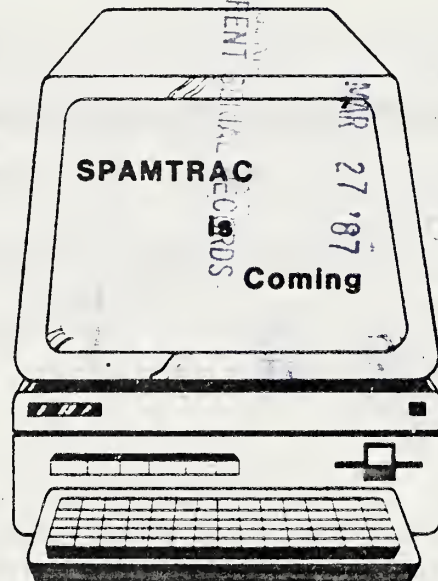
Office of Regional Operations

SPAMTRAC is Coming

Very soon, FNS managers will have instant SPAM management information at their fingertips with SPAMTRAC.

SPAMTRAC is an automated system for tracking activities of the Strategic Planning and Management (SPAM) System. For those FNS employees who have been preparing SPAM reports manually, SPAMTRAC should simplify their lives considerably. It should also save a few trees as we eliminate paper.

SPAMTRAC system offers a "user friendly," easy-to-follow set of options to display, edit, control, and transmit SPAM information. It will work on both the Televideo 816 network and on the Televideo 1605 series machines. Keeping track of SPAM tasks will be as easy as pushing buttons.



Besides producing the quarterly reports required by the SPAM system, SPAMTRAC will help program and staff directors, Regional Administrators, and Deputy Administrators manage the day-to-day responsibilities of SPAM. They will be able to generate automatically a number of useful status reports on SPAM objectives and strategies. They can also find out instantly what tasks are due and when, who's late, who's early, who did something well.

The Office of Regional Operations will train the Headquarters and Regional SPAM Coordinators on how to use SPAMTRAC during the week of November 18, 1985.

SPAMTRAC is coming soon to the Televideo nearest you! See your SPAM coordinator for details.

Washington Area News

New York Food Editor's Conference Last in Series

Administrator Bob Leard addressed the last of this year's series of Regional Editors' Conferences on Food Safety and Nutrition in New York City on November 1. An audience of some 60 correspondents and media representatives attended.

Leard discussed four of the major food assistance programs administered by FNS and some of the issues that surround them.

After a brief overview of the Food Stamp Program, the Administrator dispelled some of the myths that continue to persist about the program, such as the "inability of the homeless to get food stamps," the widely publicized "\$45 a month in food stamps to live on," and its sequel that "people don't get enough food stamps to last until the end of the month."

Leard said that the homeless are able to receive food stamps if they are qualified-- there is no residency requirement. He explained that the "\$45-a-month figure...is the national average monthly benefit for all food stamp participants. The actual benefit amount per person is based on the size and income of the household. For example, it ranges from \$10 to \$80 a month for a single-person household." Leard went on to say that food stamp recipients get enough food stamps to fully provide for their family's food needs for the entire month. "If a household has no income, it receives the maximum allotment for its household size. But households are expected to spend 30 percent of their net income on food, and many receive less than the maximum allotment. Unfortunately, some recipients don't budget their stamps or their dollars wisely. For example, food stamp recipients cannot buy T.V. dinners, expensive cuts of meat, or processed foods and expect their food stamp allotments to carry them through the month."

After reviewing the School Lunch, WIC, and Food Distribution programs, the Administrator described the Department's nationwide information campaign, "Make Your Food Dollars Count." The purpose of this campaign is to help food stamp recipients and other low-income consumers buy and prepare more nutritious and less expensive foods.

"We are attempting to reach this audience through posters, pamphlets, and slide shows in food stamp and welfare offices," Leard said, "as well as through public service announcements over radio, and in newspapers. To date, we have developed 4 pamphlets and distributed a total of 39 million copies, including 5 million in Spanish. We've produced 2 posters and distributed 65,000 copies, again with 19,000 in Spanish. We've also produced a slide tape program that's been distributed to over 1,000 food stamp, welfare, and other offices that reach needy people." Leard said that FNS is currently developing four new publications.

The Administrator went on to describe other nutrition education efforts aimed at program participants, as well as various types of technical assistance that the agency provides to the states.

The New York conference was the last in a series of five held nationwide throughout the past several months. Cosponsored by USDA and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the conferences attempted to update the writers, editors, and other information professionals who cover food safety and nutrition on the status of the Federal programs involved. Another important purpose was to introduce the conferees to information contacts in USDA and FDA and tell them how to get information about the various programs.

-Martha Newton and John Webster
Office of Public Information

Regional Roundup

Hurricane Juan Floods Coast

The last week of October was filled with surprises for weather forecasters and grief for water-logged residents along the Louisiana Gulf Coast. Since the turn of the century, only six tropical storms or hurricanes have formed in the Gulf of Mexico this late in the hurricane season.

Juan sent Gulf Coast residents scurrying for higher ground at 2:00 p.m., Sunday, October 27, when the storm gained hurricane status and headed inland, then changed directions and retreated further into the Gulf. Land-fall was finally made shortly after noon on Monday.

Hurricanes generally gain strength over warm waters and lose punch quickly as they move over land. But Juan maintained strength for three more days by feeding off both the Gulf's warmth and a high pressure system over the northeastern part of the country.

Juan dumped more than 10 inches of rain in some areas. Widespread flooding was reported throughout the low-lying coastal regions, including portions of metropolitan New Orleans. One of the hardest hit areas was Terrebonne Parish, located southwest of that city. Twelve parishes have been declared disaster areas by the Governor, and local media report that some 50,000 families have been affected by the flood.

The Red Cross operated 19 shelters, 5 central kitchens, and 8 mobile sites. From 2,500 to 3,000 people were fed through the emergency food assistance. USDA commodities were used, but state officials indicated they did not anticipate requesting a food stamp disaster declaration.

Long-term effects of Juan's destruction, especially to agriculture, are expected to be intense because of Louisiana's already depressed economy. According to the

Louisiana Department of Agriculture, 25 percent of the cotton and 30-40 percent of the soybean crops are lost; 80 percent of the sugar cane crop is still in the fields and may be unsalvageable.

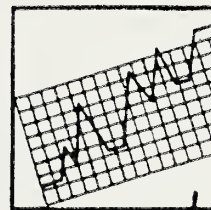
The rains finally subsided late Thursday as Juan began to disintegrate and slowly move eastward.

Coastal residents now begin the difficult task of picking up the pieces and repairing the damage. The Red Cross and Salvation Army are appealing for donations of money, food, clothing, and household items to help speed the recovery of those who suffered losses.

-Kay Blakley,
SWRO Public Affairs Staff

Personnel Division

Personnel Operating and Information System



In early December, Personnel Division will expand the Personnel Operating and Information System to the Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, Midwest, Mountain Plains, and Western Regional Offices. Hardware for this system is scheduled for delivery in late November.

Regional News

Handicapped Training Program

The Center for Rehabilitation and Training of the Disabled in Chicago has played a big part in helping the handicapped to gain the skills needed to become "job ready." Companies in the area provide job coaches to counsel, encourage, and assist handicapped individuals. The Midwest Regional Office participated in this job training program.

C. Ester Harmon, a secretary-typist in the Program Evaluation Section, Family Nutrition Programs, came to FNS with the attitude of "Thank you for giving me an opportunity to work." Ester, who was the first word processing graduate, says the Center emphasizes "that you will not be hired for your disability but rather you will be hired for your ability."



In September, a panel of job coaches and handicapped individuals participated in a session to tell others about their experiences with the Center program. From left to right: James Chandler, janitorial program worker at Marshall Field's; Dennis Schuit and Millicent Mroch, Montgomery Ward supervisors; C. Ester Harmon; and Gilda Karu, Supervisory Food Program Specialist, FNP.

Story and photo by Mary Jane Getlinger

Sharing Midwest ADP News

Midwest Region Program Analyst for Field Operations Rita Kilani has developed a unique vehicle for sharing information. "ADP News and Notes," the Field Operations monthly forum for Televideo and DEC users, was introduced in June 1985. The newsletter is devoted to sharing information and answering questions so there can be a common base of system knowledge throughout Midwest Region Field Offices. All field offices are encouraged to submit questions or any system operation information for sharing.

"Notices concerning on-line reports, file ID's, capturing data, transmitting SC3 files, Crosstalk, sales updates, and user logs have been interesting and informative," says Paul Fulmer, Officer-in-Charge, Columbus, Ohio. Columbus Field Office Secretary Shelia Preece says, "Sometimes I have questions in my mind that are answered and I find that I'm not the only one

having problems with the system." Nancy McCormick, Secretary in the Madison, Wisconsin, Field Office, feels "it gives us ideas about what others are doing."



Rita Kilani edits copy for "ADP News and Notes."

Story and photo by Mary Jane Getlinger

Job Opportunities

FNS is seeking to fill the following vacant positions. To be considered for one of them, submit an up-to-date SF-171, Personal Qualifications Statement, and current performance appraisal to the appropriate personnel office. If you're interested in a Headquarters position, apply to the Employment Branch, Personnel Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alexan-

dria, Virginia 22302. Apply directly to Headquarters office for all GS-14 and 15 positions. For Regional positions, apply directly to the Regional Office. For details on the requirements for any of the positions listed below, consult the official vacancy announcement. These are posted on designated bulletin boards or you can get copies from the appropriate Regional or Headquarters personnel office.

Friday Letter Vacancy Listing by Vacancy Number

Job Title	Series	Grade	Closing Date	Vacancy Number	Organizational Unit
Clerk Typist	322	GS-2/3/4	until filled	85-69	FNS
Clerk	303	GW-1/2	until filled	85-81	FNS
Food Program Specialist	120	GS-5/7	11/18/85	85-91	SFPD
Food Program Specialist (Schedule B-PAC Position)	120	GS-5/7	11/18/85	85-91A	SFPD
Nutritionist (Permanent-Part-time 16 to 24 hours/week)	630	GS-9/11	11/18/85	85-92	NTSD
Secretary Typing	318	GS-4/5	11/25/85	85-94	PED
Supervisory Management Analyst	343	GM-13	11/25/85	85-95	IRMD
Program Analyst	345	GS-12/13	11/25/85	85-96	OAE
*Supervisory Program Analyst	345	GM-14	11/25/85	85-97	OAE
**Management Assistant	344	GS-7	11/18/85	85-98	ASD
Computer Programmer Analyst (2 positions)	334	GS-12	12/03/85	85-99	IRMD
Statistician	1530	GS-7	11/18/85	85-H-34	HNIS
Secretary Typing	318	GS-5	11/25/85	85-H-35	HNIS
Nutritionist	630	GS-7/9	11/25/85	85-H-36	HNIS

*FNS - Nationwide

**FNS - Headquarters-wide

FNS - Food and Nutrition Service

SFPD - Supplemental Food Programs Division

NTSD - Nutrition and Technical Services Division

PED - Personnel Division

IRMD - Information Resources Development Division

OAE - Office of Analysis and Evaluation

ASD - Administrative Services Division

HNIS - Human Nutrition Information Service

